

Showing Current Law as Amended by H.R. 4353, Civilian Conservation Center Enhancement Act of 2023

[new text highlighted in yellow; text to be deleted bracketed and highlighted in blue]

The Youth Conservation Corps Act of 1970

TITLE I – YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS

...

TITLE II – PUBLIC LANDS CORPS

...

TITLE III—CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CENTERS

SEC. 301. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CENTER.—The term ‘Civilian Conservation Center’ means any residential workforce development or training facility for underserved youth operated by the Department of the Interior or the Department of Agriculture.

(2) COVERED GRADUATE.—The term ‘covered graduate’ means an individual who successfully completed a training program at a Civilian Conservation Center.

(3) COVERED STUDENT.—The term ‘covered student’ means an individual who is enrolled in a training program at a Civilian Conservation Center.

(4) SECRETARIES.—The term ‘Secretaries’ means—

(A) the Secretary of Agriculture; and

(B) the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 302. CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CENTERS WILDFIRE AND CONSERVATION TRAINING PROGRAM.

(a) SPECIALIZED TRAINING PROGRAMS.—The Secretaries, in coordination with the Secretary of Labor, shall offer at Civilian Conservation Centers specialized training programs focused on—

- (1) forestry and rangeland management;
- (2) wildland firefighting; or
- (3) any other topic relating to the mission of the Forest Service or the Department of the Interior or the public interest.

(b) PRIORITIZATION.—The Secretaries shall prioritize offering specialized training programs under subsection (a) at facilities described in section 147(d) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3197(d)).

SEC. 303. WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PILOT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) EXPERIMENT, RESEARCH, OR DEMONSTRATION PILOTS.—The Secretary of Agriculture, in coordination with the Secretary of Labor, may carry out experimental, research, or demonstration pilots to provide career and technical education curricula and course offerings to advance the missions of the Department of Agriculture at Civilian Conservation Centers operated by the Department of Agriculture, including facilities described in section 147(d) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3197(d)).

(2) CURRICULA AND COURSES.—Curricula and courses described in paragraph (1) include—

- (A) incident management and emergency response logistics;
- (B) disaster response;
- (C) forest products measurement;
- (D) timber sale administration and preparation;
- (E) heavy equipment operation;
- (F) equipment and mechanical services;
- (G) industrial electrical;

(H) machining;

(I) mill operations;

(J) forest restoration;

(K) habitat and water quality monitoring;

(L) watershed and habitat enhancement;

(M) range management;

(N) recreation access improvement;

(O) volunteers and visitors enhancement; and

(P) historic preservation.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary of Agriculture shall—

(1) identify workforce needs in public land agencies, forest, conservation, and recreation industries, and rural communities, after consulting with State governments and agencies, Federal emergency management and public land agencies, local communities, institutions of higher education, and Indian Tribes;

(2) develop marketing, recruitment, and retention materials for the curricula and courses offerings provided under subsection (a);

(3) provide specialized staff necessary to teach curricula and courses offerings provided under subsection (a), to the extent practicable; and

(4) improve Civilian Conservation Center facilities and modernize equipment used for the purposes of career and technical education.

SEC. 304. WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING WORKFORCE ENHANCEMENT.

(a) RECRUITMENT GOALS AND INVESTMENTS.—

(1) RECRUITMENT GOAL.—The Secretaries—

(A) shall each set goals of—

(i) hiring 300 covered graduates annually to contribute to wildland firefighting or other critical workforce needs within the respective Department of each of the Secretaries;

(ii) a certain percentage of covered graduates annually attaining employment within the wildland firefighting, natural resources, forestry, or a related field; and

(iii) a certain percentage of covered graduates annually attaining employment; and

(B) may make investments to support the recruitment, training, hiring, and retention of covered graduates.

(2) SIGNING BONUS.—The Secretaries may provide for a signing bonus to enable the successful employment and transition of covered graduates, including for the purpose of securing housing in rural and remote communities.

(b) DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY.—For fiscal year 2023, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Secretaries may appoint, without regard to the provisions of subchapter I of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code, other than sections 3303 and 3328 of that title, a covered graduate directly to a position for which the covered graduate meets Office of Personnel Management qualification standards.

(c) PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT.—The Secretaries shall ensure that appropriate career pathways are developed for covered graduates of relevant Civilian Conservation Center training programs.

(d) DISADVANTAGED YOUTH EMPLOYMENT.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretaries may employ covered students at regular rates of pay for necessary hours of work.

(e) USE OF COVERED STUDENTS FOR CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND GRANTS.—To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary of Agriculture shall encourage the use of covered students to fulfill obligations under contracts, agreements, and grants relevant to the training administered by the Forest Service at a unit of the National Forest System where a Civilian Conservation Center is located.

SEC. 305. WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING HOUSING PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries shall establish a pilot program to employ covered students to improve and expand the housing stock owned by the Federal Government for the purpose of housing wildland firefighters, volunteers, partner crewmembers, interns, and other agency employees.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out the pilot program under subsection (a), the Secretaries shall—

(1) identify properties currently owned by the Federal Government that would be appropriate housing for wildland firefighters, volunteers, partner crewmembers, interns, and other agency employees;

(2) identify areas where the construction of new housing described in paragraph (1) would be appropriate and sustainable; and

(3) submit to Congress a prioritized list of projects for renovation with a plan for how the Secretaries will employ covered students to repair, renovate, and remediate the properties identified under paragraph (1).

SEC. 306. REPORT.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this title, the Secretaries shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives a report—

(1) describing underutilized capacity at Civilian Conservation Centers, based on an assessment conducted by the Secretaries; and

(2) identifying the investments, improvements, and efficiencies necessary to utilize the full capacity of Civilian Conservation Centers.